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ACTION ARA-01

INFO LOG-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INRE-00 INR-01 ADS-00 NSAE-00
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P 052105Z FEB 92
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY 1834
INFO FBIS ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
SECSTATE WASHDC 7320

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LA PAZ 002059

USIA

USIA FOR P/M, INFO P/G, P/PFL, AR (ASTENZEL), ATTN:
DSREEBNY

SECSTATE FOR ARA/AND (SANCHEZ)

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: BL, VE

SUBJECT: MEDIA PLAY ON THE COUP ATTEMPT IN VENEZUELA

1. ON FEBRUARY 5 ALL LA PAZ DAILIES GAVE EXTENSIVE
COVERAGE TO THE COUP ATTEMPT IN VENEZUELA.

2. TABLOID "HOY" (LEFT-LEANING, POPULIST) PUBLISHED

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PAGE 02 LA PAZ 02059 01 OF 02 052106Z
A FRONT-PAGE BOXED HEADLINE: "VENEZUELA: SNIPERS
AGAINST MILITARY LOYAL TO PEREZ." NUMEROUS
WIRE-SERVICE ARTICLES APPEARED ON INSIDE PAGES UNDER
THE FOLLOWING HEADLINES:

"LATIN AMERICAN UNITY WITH DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA"

"TOTAL REJECTION OF COUP FROM LATIN AMERICA"

"REBEL LEADER CALLS TO LAY DOWN ARMS"

"U.S. DENIES HAVING ANTICIPATED COUP IN VENEZUELA"

"CUBA: FIDEL CASTRO SUPPORTS ANDRES PEREZ"

"PRESIDENT OF CHILE CONDEMNS COUP"

"EC CONDEMNS COUP ATTEMPT"

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON

DATE/CASE ID: 21 JUL 2008 200503656

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"VENEZUELAN CONGRESS GIVES UNANIMOUS SUPPORT"
"FEBRUARY MONTH OF BAD LUCK FOR VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT"
"TENSION IN VENEZUELA AFTER COUP"
"SOLIDARITY WITH VENEZUELA: ENERGETIC CONDEMNATION
OF COUP ATTEMPT."

3. "EL DIARIO" (CONSERVATIVE, PRO-BUSINESS)
PUBLISHED THREE FRONT-PAGE ARTICLES:
"PRESIDENT PEREZ CALLS FOR TRANQUILITY"
"GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA FRUSTRATED COUP ATTEMPT"
"U.S.: 'WE CONDEMN ATTEMPT AGAINST DEMOCRACY.'"
"EL DIARIO" PUBLISHED SEVEN MORE ARTICLES ON INSIDE
PAGES:
"MILITARY COUP PLOTTERS ATTEMPTED TO ASSASSINATE
VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT"
"PEREZ, TWICE PRESIDENT, DEFIED BY MILITARY COUP"
"VENEZUELAN MINISTER ANNOUNCED SEVERE PUNISHMENT FOR
COUP PLOTTERS"
"POLITICAL CHRONOLOGY OF VENEZUELA SINCE PEREZ
RE-ELECTION"

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"SIX BATTALLIONS PARTICIPATED IN COUP ATTEMPT"
"CALDERON CONDEMNS COUP ATTEMPT IN VENEZUELA"
"ARGENTINA WILL ESTABLISH JOINT POSITION WITH THE
UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA ON COUP."

4. "PRESENCIA" (CHURCH-OWNED, LEFT-OF-CENTER) OPENED
ITS EDITION WITH THE BANNER HEADLINE, "BELL FOR
LATIN AMERICA: COUP OF LIEUTENANT COLONELS FAILED
IN VENEZUELA." THE SUBHEADING ADDED, "COUP PLOTTERS
MAY BE CONDEMNED TO 25 YEARS IN PRISON. COUP
COINCIDES WITH BIRTHDATE OF MARSHALL JOSE ANTONIO DE
SUCRE. APPROXIMATELY 70 PEOPLE DIED, 14 ARE
MILITARY. 51 WOUNDED."

ON INSIDE PAGES "PRESENCIA" CARRIED THE STATEMENT OF
THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE BOLIVIAN MILITARY:
"MILITARY COUP IN BOLIVIA IS TOTALLY IMPOSSIBLE."
THE SUBHEAD ADDED, "BOLIVIAN MILITARY SOLIDARITY
WITH DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN VENEZUELA." ANOTHER
ARTICLE WAS HEADLINED, "UNANIMOUS CONDEMNATION (BY
ANDEAN PRESIDENTS) OF COUP ATTEMPT IN VENEZUELA."

THE LEAD EDITORIAL IN "PRESENCIA," ENTITLED "THE
OTHER FACE OF THE 'CARACAZO,'" CONCLUDED, "... IN

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ANY CASE, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE BELL THAT RANG IN CARACAS HAS AN IMPLICIT MESSAGE THAT LATIN AMERICAN LEADERS CANNOT IGNORE. AND THIS IS AN INTERNAL REALITY WHICH SURPASSES ANY STEREOTYPE AND GOES AGAINST MODELS IN WHICH BASIC HUMAN NEEDS DO NOT COUNT.

"THE COUP MUST BE RECOGNIZED AS A WARNING THAT
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SOMETHING MUST BE GOING WRONG, VERY WRONG...."

"PRESENCIA" ALSO CARRIED AN AP OP-ED PIECE BY HAROLD OLMOS ENTITLED, "CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ: FROM THE GLORY OF THE COMEBACK TO TO THE COUP ATTEMPT," WHICH AGREED WITH THE EDITORIAL IN ITS CONCLUSION: "...ON SPEAKING THIS AFTERNOON BEFORE CONGRESS, FORMER PRESIDENT AND SOCIAL CHRISTIAN LEADER RAFAEL CALDERA, A PATRIARCH OF VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY, WARNED, 'IT IS DIFFICULT FOR A PEOPLE TO LEARN DEMOCRACY WHEN IT CANNOT PROVIDE THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE AND WHEN DEMOCRACY HAS NOT STOPPED CORRUPTION. DEMOCRACY CANNOT EXIST IF THE PEOPLE DON'T EAT,' HE SAID."

5. THE LEAD HEADLINE ON THE FRONT PAGE OF "ULTIMA HORA" (CONSERVATIVE) WAS, "THEY SURRENDER BUT THREATEN TO RETURN," WHICH WAS PRINTED UNDER A SIX-COLUMN PHOTO OF THE COUP-PLOTTING SOLDIERS

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P 052105Z FEB 92
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY 1835
INFO FBIS ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
SECSTATE WASHDC 7321

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 LA PAZ 002059

USIA

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SECSTATE FOR ARA/AND (SANCHEZ)

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: BL, VE
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WALKING WITH THEIR HANDS BEHIND THEIR HEADS AFTER
THEIR DEFEAT. ANOTHER
FRONT-PAGE BOX ANNOUNCED AN
EXCLUSIVE SECTION FROM CARACAS: "THE COUP WAS LIKE
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THIS." THE FULL TEXT WAS PUBLISHED ON PAGE 16.

UNDER THE HEADLINE, "IT IS NOT POSSIBLE ANY MORE TO
ATTEMPT COUPS," THE EDITORIAL IN "ULTIMA HORA"
ARGUED IN PART THAT "...THE EXAMPLE OF VENEZUELA
SERVES TO DEMONSTRATE ONCE MORE THAT IT IS NO LONGER
POSSIBLE TO ATTEMPT COUPS AND EVEN LFSS TO ATTEMPT
THEM WITH IMPUNITY. VENEZUELA HAS ONE OF THE OLDEST
AND MOST EXPERIENCED DEMOCRACIES ON THE CONTINENT....

"THE QUESTION THAT PUBLIC OPINION IS FORMULATING IS
A VERY LOGICAL ONE: 'HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT A
DEMOCRACY OF MORE THAN THREE DECADES IN A COUNTRY
WITH ENORMOUS WEALTH CAN FIND ITSELF SO
THREATENED?' THE RESPONSE LIES IN THE PROBLEMS THAT

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SEEM COMMON TO ALL LATIN AMERICAN DEMOCRACIES....

"INCOME IN VENEZUELA IS VERY UNEVENLY DISTRIBUTED...
"IN SUCH CONDITIONS IN VENEZUELA THERE WAS ONLY ONE
SCENARIO, WITH ONLY ONE NAME TO DESCRIBE IT:
DETERIORATION. THERE WAS A COMBINATION OF FACTORS,
WHICH ASIDE FROM CORRUPTION, INCLUDED BACK-ROOM
POLITICKING AND A NEOLIBERAL ADMINISTRATION THAT
DISREGARDED SOCIAL PROBLEMS....

"WHAT IS ADMIRABLE IS THAT ALL DEMOCRACIES RAPIDLY
UNITED IN A LONG NIGHT OF TELEPHONE CALLS AND FAX
MESSAGES, WHERE THE INITIATIVE OF BOLIVIA'S
PRESIDENT WAS IMPORTANT IN CREATING A CURTAIN OF
SECURITY FOR VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY...."

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6. TABLOID "LA RAZON" (PRO-BUSINESS) PUBLISHED A
FRONT-PAGE BOX WITH A PICTURE OF TANKS IN CARACAS
UNDER THE HEADLINE, "VENEZUELA: FRUSTRATED COUP
ALMOST COSTS LIFE OF CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ." THE
SUBHEADING ADDED, "INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CONDEMNED
ATTEMPT TO DESTROY VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY." THE FULL
TEXT WAS CARRIED ON INSIDE PAGES.

ON PAGE 8 "LA RAZON" NOTED THAT "BOLIVIA JOINED IN
WORLD CONDEMNATION AGAINST THE COUP ATTEMPT IN
VENEZUEL."

THE LEAD EDITORIAL WARNED IN ITS HEADLINE, "THE
ABORTED COUP IN VENEZUELA: SEVERAL SIGNALS FOR
ALARM." IT REFLECTED, "THE COUP ATTEMPT BY A
FACTION IN THE AIR FORCE IN VENEZUELA YESTERDAY
MORNING HAS REMOVED THE ILLUSION THAT COUP ATTEMPTS
IN LATIN AMERICA ARE A THING OF THE PAST...."

7. REGARDS, CALLAHAN

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